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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0850
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0969
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RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0997
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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 3160
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 021073

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TAGS: [PK](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: PAK-AFGHAN JIRGAS: THE VIEW FROM PAKISTAN

REF: A. KABUL 5218
[1](#)B. KABUL 5451
[1](#)C. PESHAWAR 636
[1](#)D. MAATA-AGUILAR EMAIL (O-I) 19 OCT 2006
[1](#)E. ISLAMABAD 19796

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary and Comment: Pakistani officials have been tasked to coordinate a border region jirga to which Afghan President Karzai would be invited, but are proceeding at a measured pace. The Pakistan approach reflects a consensus that such an event must be organized with great care to avoid failure. Post is inclined to respect the Pakistani assessment, given the multiple security and law enforcement challenges which now confront the Government in the Tribal Belt. In post's view, the critical next step is for the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan (GOP, GOA) to negotiate the timing and modalities of these parallel jirgas directly, as they are in the best position to judge their own domestic political realities and bureaucratic capacities. As the two sides begin planning the parallel jirga(s), each must grapple with a variety of factors, ranging from the geographic area to be included, the participants to be invited and specific issues to be addressed -- all of which may require considerable analysis and grassroots outreach if the jirgas are not to be fraught with controversy. North West Frontier Province (NWFP) Governor Orakzai, tasked by President Musharraf with overseeing jirga preparations, is now focused on ensuring successful implementation of the NWA peace deal and on finalizing the FATA Development Plan. That groundwork must be in place to ensure that the cross-border jirga achieves the goals that Presidents Musharraf and Karzai discussed with President Bush at September's Trilateral Iftar. End Summary and Comment.

One Jirga at a Time

[1](#)2. (C) While intrigued by the idea of a cross-border jirga, the GOP has not exhibited the sense of urgency expressed by

President Karzai, as reported by Embassy Kabul (Refs A and B). GOP officials are more concerned about ensuring that the Pakistan jirga does not create more problems than it might solve. In his October 5 meeting with Ambassador Crocker (Ref E), NWFP Governor Orakzai took the Ambassador's point the GOP needed to begin moving forward on the jirga and said that he believed careful preparation would be important. Governor Orakzai's secretary recently told PO/Peshawar it would be a mistake to try to move forward on the jirga before the GOP had time to digest lessons from NWA jirga implementation. He thought it would take several months before provincial authorities could draw conclusions that might be of use in planning a cross-border jirga. Governor Orakzai has told the Ambassador that, in the interim, GOP jirga planners will consider the best parameters for the event: should the jirga be limited to the FATA? Extended to all NWFP? Encompass the entire Pak-Afghan border? Who should be invited to participate? Who should be frozen out?

Actually, Three Jirgas at a Time

¶3. (C) GOP capacity to manage security and political issues in the border area is already heavily taxed. On October 27, the NWFP Governor's offices told PO/Peshawar that the office had not yet even looked at the jirga proposal, as it was focusing on other urgent matters. Governor Orakzai is personally responsible for managing implementation of the North Waziristan Agency jirga agreement; in the past week, he has been drawn into a separate jirga in Bajaur Agency to resolve sectarian and other tensions. The Governor also is

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tamping down a deteriorating law-and-order environment and sectarian violence in Khyber Agency and confronting domestic terrorism, including four bombings in Peshawar in the past month. The Governor and FATA Secretariat are simultaneously pushing forward a FATA development plan. Elsewhere along the border, GOP security agencies remain engaged in operations against both the nationalist Baloch militancy and Taliban/anti-Coalition militias (ACMs) in Balochistan. In early November, President Musharraf is expected to attend a "reconciliation" jirga with representatives of Baloch tribes.

¶4. (C) When pulsed by poloff on preparations for the parallel jirgas discussed at the Trilateral Iftar, MFA official said that it will not begin serious planning until Foreign Minister Kasuri has the opportunity to discuss the concept with FM Spanta at their next Ministerial meeting, now planned for late November or early December, (Note: Last spring, the GOP and GOA committed to holding quarterly Ministerials, alternating between the two capitals. As the last meeting was held in Islamabad, Kabul would be the venue for the coming session. The MFA's Afghanistan desk officer attributed the delay in not holding the Ministerial until Nov/Dec to a heavy post-Eid scheduling on FM Kasuri's calendar, as well as lack of responsiveness by the Kabul side. End note.)

Comment

¶5. (C/NF) Reporting from Emb Kabul (Ref A and B) and information gleaned from Pakistani officials reinforce post's belief that, for these parallel jirgas to succeed, the GOA and GOP must begin talking to each other directly to ensure consensus not only on timing and logistics, but on common strategies and goals. Post understands that at the Trilateral Iftar, the two presidents each agreed to hold a jirgas -- one in Pakistan, one in Afghanistan -- which the other's president would be invited to attend, but that few other details were discussed. It is perhaps not surprising that each capital has followed-up on the jirga concept with

an idiosyncratic approach reflective of their different domestic challenges. Post recommends that the USG encourage Pakistani and Afghan officials to outline their respective visions and work out the nuts-and-bolts of jirga management directly, while discouraging freelance outreach to potential participants or tribal representatives on the other side of the border.

¶6. (C/NF) While we see no indication that the GOP is deviating from the U.S. understanding of the jirgas' goals -- inducing tribal leaders to reaffirm loyalty to their respective national governments and renounce violent militancy and Islamic extremism in exchange for a renewed commitment to investment and development in the tribal areas -- we appreciate the judgment of Pakistani officials who see haste as a recipe for failure. This view is shared by an astute observer well-versed in President Karzai's ambitions for the jirga process: the Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan, just returned from consultations in Kabul, told the Ambassador that convening a jirga in his own country is a particularly complex and risky endeavor requiring exquisite preparation and stage-management, as the risk of the assembled tribal leaders deviating from the official script could lead to disastrous consequences. He concluded that the Afghanistan jirga "must be done right, not fast" -- an assessment equally applicable on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line.

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